

## Introduction

- <https://people.com/golfer-puts-tape-over-mouth-in-effort-to-shut-myself-up-on-course-11709886>
- Ryan McCormick knew the struggle with his anger too well, and his only solution was to tape his mouth shut.
- How do you deal with your struggles? How do you try to overcome your sin? A cuss jar? Uninstall an app on your phone so you won't look at social media so much? Promising yourself, "this time it will be different?"
- We're all asking the question, "How can I finally move past my sinful struggles? How can I stop being so angry? So lustful? So prideful? So jealous?"
- The problem is NOT that we don't want to change. The problem is we try to change in our own strength, not the supernatural strength of the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit doesn't help you to manage your sin problem, the Holy Spirit changes your heart.
- Last week, we talked about the ongoing struggle with sin. You will always struggle with the old nature, but you are not left powerless. You can, by the Spirit, put sin to death.
- [Romans 8](#) shows us how to live by the power of the Spirit. As we look at the first part of this chapter, I want to give you three truths to help you live life in the Spirit.

## Guilt does not paralyze you.

- vs. 1 - Paul has just written honestly about the struggle we all share: war with the old nature. We want to do what's right, but we find ourselves falling back into sinful actions.
- We're desperate. We have no ability on our own to please God. We need help. Who will rescue us? Jesus - He DOES NOT condemn us. He rescues us.
- NO CONDEMNATION! You might think that if you keep turning back to sin even as a follower of Jesus you are heaping up condemnation on yourself, but that's not true.
- When you placed your faith in Jesus, you were cleared of all charges against you; free from any punishment. It's done. At the cross, the full penalty of your sins was paid for - past, present, and future.
- vs. 2 - The law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. Law = what governs over your life. The Spirit is now your governing authority, not the law. He gives you life - the law can't do that.
- vs. 3 - The law only exposed your sinful heart. The law was "weakened by the flesh" It couldn't make you right before God because of your sinful heart. What the law could not do (save you), God did.
- vs. 3-4 - God condemned sin by sending His Son who came in the *likeness* of the sinful flesh. Jesus NOT sinful - but He was fully human while at the same time fully God. Had to be fully human so He could live for us the life we could not live, living out God's law fully, only to go to the cross to pay the full penalty for our sin.
- The work of God by the Spirit through the Son removes ALL condemnation. In Christ, you will never stand before God as guilty. You are free.

- BUT... The problem is you see yourself differently than God sees you. When you sin, you feel guilty, and the guilt can paralyze you.
- You know what it's like to feel guilt - to feel like you just can't it right and God could never love you which is certainly not true.
- What happens when you are paralyzed by guilt?
- **You give up, and you give in.** You stop fighting sin and just give in to it.
- **You never think you're good enough to be used by God.** You lie to yourself, and don't even try to serve Him.
- **You hide.** Like Adam and Eve in the garden, you don't want God to see you. You hide from the church.
- Does guilt characterize your life? If you are paralyzed by guilt - let [Romans 8:1](#) wash over your soul. Your guilt is erased. What you are telling yourself is NOT how God sees you.

## **New life and peace now characterize you.**

- Paul contrasts two ways of living: a life lived according to the flesh vs. a life lived according to the Spirit.
- A life lived according to the flesh is a life that rejects God - it's the life you lived before you came to faith in Christ.
- Your mind was set on the things of the world. You wanted what you wanted. You were hostile to the Law of God - you didn't desire to do His will. You could not please God (vs. 8). You did not have the Spirit within you. You did not belong to God (vs. 9).
- If you are in Christ, your life is different. The Spirit of God is in you (vs. 9).

- Vs. 10 - the struggle - the body is dead - wrestling with sin - corruptible - but there is life in you because you have been declared righteous. You already have resurrection life.
- This reality gives you a different MINDSET. Those who have life by the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. That's where the power is - thinking consistently on the things of the Spirit because what you think about determines what you do - THIS brings peace and life instead of guilt and shame (vs. 6).
- What are the things of the Spirit? The fruit of the Spirit. The glory of God. Truth. Justice. Beauty. Love for God's church. Love for people. Love for God's Word.
- When set your mind on the things of the Spirit, you are in fellowship the Spirit. You can expect the Spirit to produce fruit in you as you desire what He desires.
- Paul is NOT describing immediate victory over sin, but He is saying that we have the power of the Spirit to combat our sin. We struggle with hope because we know the Spirit is working in us as we place ourselves under the Law of the Spirit.
- How do you set your mind on the things of the Spirit?
  - **Know what you have.** The Spirit is in you - His mind is in you. You have the Spirit. This is the gift of God!
  - **Pay attention to what you dwell on.** What you dwell on may actually quench the Spirit. Dwell on your anger? How unfair life is? How guilty you feel? Selfish desires? If you were to do an inventory of what you dwelt on last week, did you spend much time setting your mind on the things of the Spirit?
  - **Accept the conflict.** Struggling does not mean your failing. Struggling is an opportunity to depend on the Spirit to help you in your battle against sin. The more mature you become, the more sin

you will be aware of that needs to be dealt with. BUT there's life and peace in the struggle because we trust the Spirit's work, we know that God does not condemn us, and we have the power to put sin to death as we think on the things of the Spirit.

## **Fear and insecurity no longer control you.**

- vs. 12-13 - You are NOT obligated to the flesh. What a powerful statement. You DON'T have to give in to sin because of the Spirit's work in you. However, if you choose to give yourself to sin and reject the work of God, you will find death instead of life.
- You will experience life if you live under the Law of the Spirit and seek His help to put to death sin.
- vs. 14-15. You don't have to fear condemnation because those who belong to the Spirit are children of God. You are not enslaved to sin or to the law as a way to try to earn your acceptance before God. You are a child of God.
- It's easy to fall into fear. When you fall back into sin, you are tempted to fear. "Does God really love me? Will I ever measure up? Could God ever love someone like me?" All questions motivated by insecurity.
- Instead of fear - remember that you are a beloved child of God. Paul has talked at much length about justification. Now, he talks about adoption. God not only declared you righteous (legal), He brought you into His family. When we cry out to God, we're not crying out to an unkind, merciless judge. We're crying out to our Father who longs to do a good work in the lives of His children. Abba is intimate and personal - your Father is near. He's at work.
- vs. 16-17 - The Spirit affirms within us that we belong to God. You've had those moments when you questioned God's love for you and the

Spirit reminded you through a Scripture verse, a song of the faith, or the encouragement of another believer that you belong to a loving Father.

- If you are a child of God, and you are, you are coheirs with Him. What He has - the riches of glory, completely access to the Father, belongs to you. Jesus earned it all because of His work on our behalf, but what He earned, He freely gives to us.
- We will suffer with Christ - hardships because of our faith. BUT, we will also be glorified with Him. We will share in resurrection life.
- These verses are a comforting reminder of the Spirit's work in your life. Because you are adopted by the Father and NOT controlled by fear and insecurity:
- **Don't beat yourself up, just get back up.** Guilt is real. It's easy to beat yourself up, but God doesn't. He forgives, gives grace, and the empowerment of the Spirit to start again. Where is it in your life that you need to get back up? In a relationship - making something right. Acknowledging a sinful attitude. God is not done with you.
- **Stop confusing conviction with condemnation.** God does not condemn but He does convict. Conviction is when God graciously exposes sin so you can deal with it. Conviction does not illicit guilt but action - specifically repentance.
- **Welcome corrective discipline.** Life in the Spirit welcomes the work of the Spirit, and often a work of the Spirit not only includes conviction but also discipline. Discipline is correction. God might discipline us through the sting of conviction or consequences of sin or by someone lovingly rebuking you.
- Simple prayer: Lord, convict me of my sin and discipline me - correct me. How often do you want that type of work of God in your life?

- This morning, an invitation to life in the Spirit, a life growing in a relationship with God and putting to death the things that are opposed to God. A life that you can have by faith in the One who came to deliver you from death to give you life. Jesus died and rose again so you might have new life. If you've never experienced new life, repent of your sins and surrender to Him today.